



SIXTH ITEM ON THE AGENDA

First ILO Gender Audit

1. The Committee will recall that, at its session in November 2002, it had before it a document on this subject (GB.285/ESP/7/1). It was decided to examine the matter at the present session. The original paper is appended to this document for the Committee's consideration.

Geneva, 14 January 2003.



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Other questions**First ILO Gender Audit**

1. The First ILO Gender Audit, which was also the first such participatory audit in the United Nations system, was conducted from 1 October 2001 to 30 April 2002 at a total of 15 work units in headquarters and in field offices. The audit was foreseen in the *Action Plan on Gender Equality and Mainstreaming in the ILO*, which was submitted to the Governing Body in March 2000. A final report in English on the audit, its findings and recommendations, is available on the ILO Gender Equality Tool web site (www.ilo.org/gender). The report is structured broadly around the Key Result Areas of the Action Plan. The report includes the attached executive summary and summary of recommendations of the final report of the ILO Gender Audit 2001-02. Translations of the report in French and Spanish will be available in due course.

Objective of the Gender Audit

2. The main objective of the Gender Audit was to promote organizational learning at the individual, work unit and Office levels on how to implement gender mainstreaming effectively in the policies, programmes and structures of the Office. This included assessing the extent to which the ILO policy on gender mainstreaming is being institutionalized.

In July 1997, the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) defined the concept of gender mainstreaming as follows:

“Mainstreaming a gender perspective is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action including legislation, policies or programmes, in any area and at all levels. It is a strategy for making the concerns and experiences of women as well as of men an integral part of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres, so that women and men benefit equally, and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal of mainstreaming is to achieve gender equality.”

3. The audit used a participatory self-assessment methodology, which was devised by the Netherlands-based Gender and Development Training Centre and adapted for the ILO. In the gender audit process, a three- to four-person facilitation team spent some two weeks at each work unit. During this time the team assessed work units' documents, facilitated workshops with professional and support staff, and wrote a report that summarized

findings and recommendations. A global desk review was also conducted by an external consultant of the ILO's policy documents, flagship publications and other documents.

Methodology

4. The methodology used for the audit was based on current thinking about gender and organizational change. This includes the importance of learning organization; the fact that both men and women are key actors in social and organizational change; recognizing that qualitative self-assessments should take into account both objective data and subjective perceptions when seeking to understand tangible and intangible factors, facts and interpretations; and that the adult learning cycle starts with sharing and reflection upon experiences of participants to arrive at a general conceptualization of a problem and formulation of solutions to it.
5. This participatory methodology was put into practice in workshop or meeting settings by means of exercises described in detail in the *ILO Gender Audit Manual*; all the exercises were aimed at encouraging reflection and discussion and eliciting information on a variety of organizational issues.

Conceptual framework

6. The conceptual and structural framework of the Gender Audit consisted of 12 key elements:
 - (1) Current gender issues, gender debate and relationship of the ILO with national gender machineries and women's organizations in the context in which the programme is implemented.
 - (2) Mainstreaming of gender equality as a cross-cutting concern in the ILO's strategic objectives, programme and budget.
 - (3) Mainstreaming of gender equality in the implementation of programmes and technical cooperation activities.
 - (4) Existing gender expertise and competence and capacity building.
 - (5) Information and knowledge management on gender issues.
 - (6) Systems and instruments in use for accountability and to monitor, report and evaluate performance on gender equality.
 - (7) Choice of partner organizations (including relationships with constituents).
 - (8) ILO gender equality policy as reflected in ILO products and public image.
 - (9) Decision-making on gender mainstreaming in the ILO.
 - (10) Staffing and human resources concerning gender-balance and gender-friendly policies.
 - (11) Organizational culture and its effects on gender equality.
 - (12) Perception of achievement on gender equality.

7. These 12 elements formed a connecting thread throughout the Gender Audit, linking the global desk review and the work unit document reviews and workshops. They served as guidelines for drafting the reports about work unit audits, as well as the basis from which “best practices” in gender mainstreaming could be identified.

Participatory process

8. Each of the 15 work unit audits included a review of the work unit’s major internal and public documents, participatory workshops of one to two days; interviews with the unit director, gender focal point and, in some cases, other staff. Feedback sessions were also held at the end of each audit in order to discuss with the entire work unit the facilitation team’s findings. In order to form a picture of perceptions of the ILO’s performance on promoting gender equality, facilitation teams of field audits met with the tripartite constituents, representatives of implementing partners, women’s associations, and/or of gender units of other United Nations agencies. In Jordan, the Minister of Labour received the facilitation team, and the team in Cameroon met with the Ministers for the Promotion of the Status of Women, Social Affairs and Labour, and Employment and Social Security.

Global desk review

9. The global desk review covered a wide range of documents, including documentation on Office-wide policy and strategic budgeting, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, and human resources. Some publications and internal materials from the four technical sectors were also analysed. The review included interviews with senior ILO staff, and took into account key processes such as strategic budgeting, development of statistics and indicators, and human resource development.

Senior Management Team meeting on the Gender Audit

10. The findings and recommendations of the audit were discussed by the Senior Management Team (SMT) with regional directors present, on 15 June 2002. They agreed that the audit had been a useful exercise which had provided an opportunity for organizational learning not only on gender equality but also on many “beyond gender” issues. The SMT recognized that political commitment was key to achieving gender mainstreaming and promoting gender equality in the ILO’s work. However, this had to be supplemented with human and financial resources since incentives for tackling gender issues had been missing.
11. The SMT said that gender had to be built into the entire monitoring and evaluation process of the ILO’s strategic framework. Gender objectives needed to be integrated in objectives at all levels. This included work related to the PRSPs (Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers), UNDAF (United Nations Development Assistance Framework) and UN Millennium Development Goals. The SMT stressed that impact indicators were essential. They recognized that some work had already been done in this area in the context of the programme and budget, but that more needed to be done.
12. The SMT endorsed the findings of the audit that, in terms of capacity, an increasing number of staff Office-wide were deepening their understanding of gender issues – although many still had not. A sound human resource base was needed: committed senior

managers, capable gender specialists, and gender focal points to support the overall effort. There was also a need for an integrated plan to improve gender balance in the Office.

International interest in the ILO Gender Audit

13. Much interest has been expressed in the piloting of the participatory approach used in the First ILO Gender Audit; the Gender Bureau is receiving a growing number of requests for the final report. The Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women of the United Nations, as well as the Director of the Division for the Advancement of Women, have conveyed congratulations. They have also expressed interest in the methodology for accelerating achievement of gender mainstreaming in the UN system. The OECD/DAC has invited the Office to share the gender audit experience, as well as other groups including the American Council of Voluntary International Action (InterAction). The Office has been requested to make a presentation about the audit at the next meeting of the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality in February 2003 in New York.

Looking forward

14. Building on what has been achieved and learned in the First ILO Gender Audit, the Office will continue conducting participatory audits in 2003 in response to new requests from work units at headquarters and in the regions. However, more efforts will be made to assist the constituents in strengthening their capacity to implement the gender mainstreaming strategy for gender equality. Project proposals for cash surplus have been made along these lines. The experiences of the pilot project entitled *Enhancing the Gender Mainstreaming Capacity of ILO Constituents*, which is now being implemented in four countries, and other good practices in this area will be widely shared among the constituents. More human and financial resources will be directed towards developing practical and user-friendly tools and manuals to facilitate efforts to promote gender mainstreaming for equality between men and women in the world of work.

Geneva, 26 September 2002.

Appendix I

Executive summary of the final report

Background

The inclusion of gender as a cross-cutting concern in the Strategic Policy Framework 2002-05 has had a significant impact on raising awareness among ILO staff and constituents of gender equality as central to the Decent Work Agenda.

Political commitment to equality between men and women at the highest level of management is key to placing the ILO in the forefront of the international community as a champion of gender equality. The Director-General's 1999 Circular and Action Plan on Gender Equality and Mainstreaming in the ILO are critical instruments. They outline the steps to be taken to ensure that gender equality is addressed at the programme level and that the necessary institutional mechanisms are in place to support the mainstreaming strategy and assign accountability. The ILO has already been cited as a best practice example within the United Nations family in integrating gender in its programme and budget. Visibility was further enhanced at the Inter-Agency Gender Budgeting Workshop hosted by the ILO in Geneva in November 2001. The participatory ILO Gender Audit is the first of its kind within the UN system and there is much interest in the methodology being used.

The First ILO Gender Audit set out to assess progress and thus establish a baseline on gender mainstreaming in the Office. The audit was participatory in order to enhance maximum organizational learning on the "how to" of gender mainstreaming. The Gender Audit had two major components: (1) participatory Gender Audits in 15 work units in the field and at headquarters; and (2) a global desk review of the ILO's key publications and documents. There were 750 internal documents and publications analysed during the audit period. Around 450 staff, constituents, implementing partners and women's organizations participated in the workshops and interviews. The overall staff sex balance was fairly even while among other participants there were about 20 per cent more women. Thirty-one volunteer staff members, seven of them men, from 21 work units were trained as Gender Audit facilitators. Fifteen work units and field offices undertook a participatory Gender Audit. They were:

Field	Headquarters	
Kathmandu Office	IFP/DIALOGUE	(sector 4)
Dar es Salaam Area Office	ILO/AIDS	(sector 3)
MDT, Bangkok	EMP/SFU	(sector 2)
MDT Central/Eastern Europe, Budapest	IFP/CRISIS	(sector 2)
MDT Eastern Europe/Central Asia, Moscow	EMP/COOP	(sector 2)
Brasilia Area Office	IFP/SEED	(sector 2)
MDT Central Africa, Yaoundé	IFP/DECLARATION	(sector 1)
MDT Arab States, Beirut		

Findings

Gender in the work of the ILO

Efforts are under way in all the audited work units to address those gender issues relevant to their technical area or region. All units had good examples of research and technical cooperation projects that included data disaggregated by sex, data analysis, gender equality objectives, indicators and conclusions, as well as proposed strategies for action. The global desk review also identified a number of good practices in this respect. Throughout the audit around 750 documents were

analysed. Of these only a minority could be considered to be fully gender mainstreamed. These tended to systematically address gender with data and analysis throughout the text or project cycle. Where data was not disaggregated by sex, the authors explained why. The majority of documents were mainly gender blind. Some partially mainstream gender by including data on men and women, or boys and girls, in some sections of a report or situation analyses for project documents.

The audit also showed that there is often confusion on concepts and terminology and on differences between, for example, actions to respond to the practical needs of women workers and those which address strategic gender needs, thereby challenging gender relations. The audits of offices in the regions also showed that constituents were quite open to more gender emphasis coming from the Office and that staff, therefore, could be more proactive in promoting gender equality if they wanted to and knew how to do so. In some work units, networking with organizations and institutions having gender expertise were quite well developed. This is an area to strengthen in order to improve staff capacity on gender as well as that of the constituents and implementing partners.

Some critical areas for the Office to work on:

- extending the understanding that sex discrimination is not only an issue in its own right but cuts across all other forms of discrimination;
- clarifying in the ILO context gender concepts such as gender equity, gender equality, gender mainstreaming, gender analysis, women's empowerment, men and masculinities;
- analysing and documenting the gender issues pertinent to each technical area;
- reflecting on concepts such as the "Veera" concept which defines the archetypal beneficiary of the ILO as a poor working woman and makes the satisfaction of her needs a benchmark for the effectiveness of the ILO's interventions;
- strengthening collective work on gender indicators;
- developing the male side of gender analysis, as for example in the ILO/AIDS programme;
- elaborating a deeper policy analysis on gender equality and decent work;
- ensuring the visibility of gender in high profile ILO and inter-agency frameworks such as PRSP, World Commission on the Social Dimensions of Globalization, Global Employment Agenda, Jobs for Africa, Universitas and ILO cooperation agreements with countries;
- encouraging more men to be involved in work related to gender and to work in areas where women are concentrated in both the Professional and General Service staff categories;
- tackling the difficult issue of the low representation of women among ILO constituents;
- documenting and sharing best practices across the Office;
- promoting the adoption of an Organization-wide policy on gender mainstreaming;
- implementing gender mainstreaming programmes with constituents.

Institutional mechanisms

The results-based management system newly introduced to the ILO has been a real boost for gender mainstreaming, as it provides the mechanisms by which gender equality can be formulated as a goal as well as measured, monitored and reported on. However, the inclusion of gender indicators remains weak within the global framework. This could explain a lack at the work unit level where gender equality objectives and indicators would be essential to achieving operational objectives. Another problem could be the vagueness of the term "cross-cutting" coupled with the confusion about what gender mainstreaming actually means. Some of the audited work units, however, have integrated gender to a significant extent in their workplans in terms of strategies and activities. In a couple of instances, units introduced innovations by setting a numerical target of the proportion of work of the unit that had to be gender mainstreamed. Overall, the Gender Audit found that at the level of reporting to the Governing Body this was done in relation to gender usually when there was a specific gender indicator. On the other hand, quite a lot of work was being done in the Office on gender without being linked to indicators and therefore went unreported. The recent programme guidance note for 2004-05 establishing a policy objective on gender should address

these difficulties. The challenge before us is to design qualitative indicators that can measure the extent to which the content of products and policies used and adopted by ILO constituents and others are gender sensitive.

The Gender Audit showed that gender specialists and gender focal points were generally very much valued by the work units as they provided the support for gender activities and reminders to staff to include gender in their work. However, there is still a tendency for the gender work to be carried out mainly by these staff. The Turin annual consultation in February 2002 reaffirmed the need for a gender focal point system and specialists, as gender expertise across the Office is still weak. There is an urgent need for clear mandates and job descriptions to be elaborated that establish the gender network members as catalysts to promote mainstreaming in their various work units. Managerial directives need to be clear in this regard. The audit also found that more coordination is needed within and between the sectors and regions of the Gender Network to share good practices and confront challenges.

Capacity building of staff and constituents on gender concepts and the “how to” of gender analysis and gender planning has generally occurred on an ad hoc basis. The InFocus Programme on Promoting the Declaration, however, has introduced regular briefings on gender for the Chief Technical Advisers (CTAs) of the projects. IFP/DIALOGUE also systematically introduces gender in its planning and capacity-building sessions with headquarters and field staff. While the Gender Audit was an interactive and learning experience for the work units involved, it could not meet the needs encountered everywhere for step-by-step training in gender analysis and planning. Ways need to be found to ensure that all staff have the opportunity to acquire this expertise which is fundamental to gender mainstreaming.

The new Gender Equality Tool web site offers the chance to provide better information management of the wealth of existing gender initiatives, materials and resources. However, much will depend on the extent to which staff contribute to the site.

Finally, the Gender Audit confirmed that where there is managerial commitment and sound management practices gender mainstreaming is “taking off”. The audit also looked at issues of organizational culture and found that there is a need for more teamwork between all categories of staff in order to be able to reflect and plan work in a systematic manner. This would provide a more enabling environment for gender to be integrated. In general the audit found that staff are overwhelmed with the demands of work and an atmosphere of crisis management. They have little time to reflect on issues such as gender and there is a tendency to want a “quick fix” due to time pressures. This very much affects the quality of the policy analysis and implementation strategies.

Looking forward

Mainstreaming gender improves the quality of outputs and performance in the Decent Work Agenda. To make this happen all technical staff should have a clear understanding of ILO gender policy and concepts and acquire competence in gender analysis and planning. Therefore, all staff must be given the opportunity and time to receive appropriate training. This will require the sectors and regions to allocate resources for this purpose. Once staff have the competence, they will be in a position to deliver gender-sensitive services and products to the constituents and in turn assist them in promoting gender equality in the world of work. Improving the coordination of the Gender Network is critical for ensuring institutional support to gender mainstreaming and stimulating innovation on the “how to” of promoting gender equality in the world of work.

To put these goals into practice each sector and region needs to guarantee: analysis and documentation of gender issues in the technical areas and regional contexts as well as development of tailor-made tools; minimum training in gender concepts and gender analysis for technical, programme and project staff; gender awareness raising for support staff; the functioning of a gender team with regular meetings for sectors and a periodic meeting for regions; at least one event per year on a relevant gender issue; encouragement for work units to develop their own mainstreaming strategy; and systematic involvement of the gender coordinator/gender specialist/GFP in programming and planning. Audited units have a headstart to develop and implement their own actions on the basis of the findings of their audit.

To support these efforts the Gender Bureau could guarantee to: coordinate collective work on gender indicators; stimulate further policy analysis work on gender equality; continue the gender audit process and follow up on audits already undertaken; assist in training and developing

materials; prepare a compendium of good practices on gender mainstreaming; manage in-house gender resources through the Gender Equality Tool web site; and continue to support the Gender Network.

Appendix II

Summary of recommendations of the First ILO Gender Audit

These recommendations are made according to the five Key Result Areas of the Action Plan on Gender Equality and Mainstreaming in the ILO. After discussion by the SMT of these recommendations, the Gender Bureau will prepare an execution plan in consultation with the sectors, regions and relevant work units.

Policy statement on gender equality and gender mainstreaming

(Key Result Area 1)

- Define and deepen the understanding of gender equality concepts such as gender equity, empowerment of women, men and masculinities within the mandate of the ILO and identify specific gender equality results the ILO will pursue.
- Clarify what the gender equality issues are in the Decent Work Agenda and define objectives; specifically, broaden the understanding that is published in *Decent Work for Women* to a gender equality perspective that clearly outlines the changes in gender relations, mechanisms and institutions that the ILO wants to achieve under the Decent Work Agenda.
- Ensure that gender policy issues are addressed in the preparation and follow-up of ILC discussions on the informal economy (2002), discrimination (2003), and migration (2004).
- Build on the increasing interest in and needs for support on gender issues from the constituents, and find ways of promoting the Office's work on gender equality more actively with constituents and beyond.

Gender mainstreaming in the work of the ILO

(Key Result Area 4)

- Improve gender mainstreaming in the programme and budget as regards the sectors, regions and work-unit level workplans by developing qualitative and quantitative indicators and targets, so as to make results-based monitoring of gender mainstreaming possible.
- Develop monitoring and feedback systems and especially practices to allow for continuous learning, adjustment and improvement on gender equality.
- Update and revise the guidelines for mainstreaming gender equality in analysis, planning, monitoring and evaluation of technical cooperation and integrate them into Office manuals on technical cooperation.
- Develop further and apply guidelines for inclusion of gender equality issues in the supervisory systems of ILO standards.
- Explore ways (for example, by establishing a separate budget line for the gender policy objective) to allow for tracking of resources spent on gender mainstreaming and the promotion of gender equality issues.
- Clearly reflect the work done by the gender teams in each sector and region in the preparations of the programme and budget for the 2004-05 biennium.
- Promote the establishment of and provide support to National Tripartite Commissions on Gender Equality at the country level.

Gender mainstreaming in the structure of the International Labour Office

(Key Result Area 2)

- Strengthen the capacity of the sectors' gender coordinators through a clear allocation of time and tasks in their job descriptions, making it clear that their principal role is being an advocate, catalyst and coordinator and not that of "doer".
- Strengthen the gender focal point system at headquarters and in the field through a precise allocation of time and tasks in their job descriptions. Develop clear terms of reference for gender focal points, emphasizing their catalytic and advisory roles in assisting the development of gender analysis in the technical area of their units and the development of tailor-made gender tools.
- Increase the level of coordination and consultation across the Gender Network (between gender coordinators, gender focal points and senior gender specialists in and between the sectors and regions) so that more teamwork and synergy takes place. Create a virtual electronic meeting room to facilitate teamwork at this level, although access of staff to Intranet will need to be improved in the field for this to function well.

Capacity building for gender mainstreaming

(Key Result Area 3)

- Stimulate action on gender equality by management practices that promote workplace-related learning: regular team meetings, peer reviews, in-house round-table discussions, and exchange of project evaluation and mission reports.
- Organize further gender capacity-building sessions for constituents as well as for staff. Embed these more strongly in the specific technical areas of the ILO. Require a plan to be drawn up at the end of each session on how the lessons learned will be put into practice. Monitor the plan periodically.
- Systematize and make more easily available the enormous amount of good gender material available at headquarters and in the regions (also on the Intranet). These will be organized under the following headings:
 - manuals for capacity building;
 - tools for gender analysis and gender planning;
 - manuals and guidelines related to specific technical areas; and
 - research reports and publications.
- Continue the gender audit process and anchor it in the capacity-building and learning/monitoring activities of the sectors, regions and work units. The Gender Audit will gradually become a self-steering process undertaken by work units in the Office. To promote this process continue training sessions for Gender Audit facilitators and organize annual evaluative round-table meetings.

Gender-sensitive human resource and staff policy

(Key Result Area 5)

- Make gender sensitivity a specific requirement for all ILO staff. Make gender competence (e.g. the ability to carry out basic gender analysis and planning) a requirement for all technical, programming, project and managerial staff. Include these clearly in generic job descriptions and competency assessments. Opportunities for staff to learn about gender analysis and planning will be provided in a time-bound manner.

- Develop a clear set of targets for the improvement of staff sex balance at all levels. Measure progress according to relevant, accurate, consistent data and indicators. Identify ways of collecting and analysing additional data to monitor other factors (e.g. family responsibilities) that affect staff balance. Publish these on a regular basis and discuss them at Senior Management Team meetings.
- Continue to promote female leadership in the Office, and actively target women for senior posts.
- Create more equal opportunities for career development for women and men through the Personal Development Plans and the personnel supervisory and evaluation systems.
- Analyse current excessive workload at all levels: time management, work processes, overtime registration, travel (out-of-duty-station periods), etc. Create a working environment in the ILO in which the combination of professional and private life is more balanced.
- Sexual and other forms of harassment and all forms of sexist behaviour will not be tolerated and will be regarded as grave offences requiring disciplinary action. Ensure that membership of the Joint Panel on resolution of grievances will be gender-balanced.